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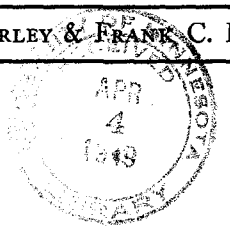

THE NEW RULING CLASS

by Edna Lonigan

The United States has passed through several political crises since 1929, but strangest of all is the crisis that began with the national conventions last June. Since then we have had a succession of popular moods, each sweeping the whole country, yet followed almost immediately by a quite different mood.

The incredible election, itself a reversal of mood, was accepted by the nation with an outpouring of good will toward a President who was obviously a plain homespun American, a cracker barrel politician not afraid of the hustings. Despite a few tall promises it was not believed that Truman would do anything to undermine our form of government. The years of bitter social strife seemed to be over.

The black mood followed quickly, when the President submitted his annual messages, and it became evident that he had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. Now the black has been replaced by a grim gray mood, a realization that even the self-styled "Fair Dealers" are unhappy, and may yet decide to plunge us into war to keep their power.

Do these violent psychological fluctuations merely reflect the instability of the crowd, "vain as a leaf upon the stream"? Are they the responses of a politically sophisticated people to forces too alien for them to analyze in terms of their historical understanding?

The second question points the answer. We are confronted with a development that Americans do not have the experience to envisage, something for which our language does not even have a name. Opponents of Statism have divided their forces in separate battles directed against the New Deal, Fascism, and Communism. We have failed to recognize the common factor in all these issues. The political problem of our day is the emergence, beneath all the Left Wing governments, of rule by the "palace guard". This small elite within the bureaucracy knows all the Machiavellian arts of power, and skillfully uses the pretext of mass welfare to establish itself in absolute control.

We were right, in November, in regarding President Truman as a cracker barrel politician, out of the old West. We were also right, in January, in thinking that the Administration had abandoned our Constitution. What we missed was the connecting link; the fact that the

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"palace guard" controls Truman, as it controlled Roosevelt, and that its only policy is maintenance of its own power. Harry Hopkins and other shining lights of the Roosevelt elite are gone, but they were not important as individuals. The elite is a new class, trained in handling the high voltage wires of absolute power. When one topples, another is ready to take his place. The forces that support this group must be defeated, if we wish to return to Constitutional government.

II

Nineteenth Century Left Wing movements were dominated by an ideal, a belief that economic life could be made over so that those who did the hard work of the world would have more wealth and more ease. That movement is dead. There is no Left Wing party in power now. There are loyal Left Wing leaders in prominent, if not important, positions, but actual control of government has moved to the power-minded.

James Burnham, in The Managerial Revolution, pointed out that by 1940 Socialism had everywhere ceased to be proletarian Socialism, and had become government by "the managers". He showed that industrial workers had gained full political power in many countries after 1918, only to see that power everywhere slip from their grasp. The workers do not have the talent, training or inclination to be a ruling class.

The Left Wing party has everywhere changed to the leadership party, in which a sophisticated elite emerges and keeps its mass followers in line with subsidies, propaganda and plebiscites. This change in Socialist party character, from the membership party to the leadership party, is the most important political fact of the Twentieth Century.

Lenin won over his political rivals because he had a disciplined body of picked men, who acted as an officer class, and regimented the masses as a body of raw conscripts. Mussolini and Hitler also saw that the masses, once regimented, could be organized behind any ideology.

Many have failed to see the underlying significance of these developments. They wanted, for sentimental reasons, to believe that the Left Wing movement was a success but had been diverted from its goals by men of violence. Many did not want to admit that the rise of the leadership party, where the members are not citizens but ciphers, has been the logical outcome of Left Wing political theory itself.

Left Wing governments failed because they were unworkable. Like the Weimar Republic, they weakened the moral power of government by refusing to let people govern themselves. They wasted the capital of the nation by restricting, hampering and penalizing private enterprise.

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They built vast unproductive bureaucracies, paralleled by vast armies of unemployed. The moderate Socialist leaders had neither the courage to return to liberty, nor the ruthlessness to go on to confiscation of wages, regimented "defense" production, and compulsory labor. And so the Left Wing governments came everywhere under the domination of men who know that to hold concentrated power one must abandon all scruples.

III

The goal of the new elite is the same in every country. They devise one program of "welfare" after another, but, however their "planned economies" may seem to differ, they all centralize power.

The role of the Leader, while important in the beginning, is easily exaggerated. The Leader is the symbol to which the people's emotions are attached, the charismatic "savior", whom Max Weber foresaw so clearly a generation ago. The elite strip the people of their possessions while the Leader holds them enthralled. So completely is the Leader's function that of a symbol that he can continue to head the government long after he is physically broken, as Roosevelt proved.

The governing elite must be conspiratorial, because it is doing the exact opposite of what the Leader says. Every governmental utterance must be designed to delude. The elite must be secretive, because it must constantly change its tactics to keep the people deceived, and to confuse its adversaries. The elite must be dynamic, to seize quickly all the new means of power, before people realize what is happening.

When it assumes power, the leadership party's program is pacific and takes the form of the domestic Welfare State. But first in Germany, then in Russia and Japan, now here in America, we see the effort to build the World Welfare State, scattering its largesse and spreading its tentacles over the world. Of course this brings opposition, and then the Welfare State becomes the Garrison State, in which the people are induced to surrender what remains of their wealth to the elite, for protection against "The Enemy".

But whatever the stage of the development, government by the elite is a return to Absolutism. When the elite manages a dominant share of the nation's resources, the voters' representatives cannot exercise the power of the purse, and therefore they cannot keep the executive subordinate to Law. The Constitution functions only when the people keep their own money, and dole it out through their own representatives to an executive which takes orders. It is necessary for a new elite to keep up the forms of government by law, so that citizens will not be aroused.

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But in time a new danger arises, from rival leaders with their own would-be elites, and then the cloak of legalism is thrown off, and the elite in power uses force to make its rivals conform. We are close to that stage, in this country, today.

IV

The early New Dealers were mostly Left Wing dreamers. As their projects failed, the power these romantics lost was picked up by the ruthless. Today our government takes at least 25 per cent of our earnings. Ten years of the productive life of the average American is committed to his political managers. Is this confiscation producing peace, prosperity or ease of mind?

At the moment our elite is financing a world Neo-Socialist elite which is opposing a Neo-Communist elite for control of the world. Whether "we" win, or the Neo-Communists take over by penetration, or new factions arise, is anybody's guess. In any event the American experiment will be a thing of the past. It cannot survive as a yardstick to measure the performance of the State economy.

There are still twenty million or more Americans who believe the American experiment is the last best hope of earth, that the only way to contain Communism, at home or abroad, is to maintain this Republic. Can these disunited citizens control a domestic elite which is unscrupulous, conspiratorial and dynamic, which is wrapped in the symbols of an old social idealism, and supported by millions of uninformed voters and billions of our money?

If all the people who are opposed to Neo-Communism, to Neo-Socialism and to New Dealism were to realize that they are all fighting one thing, the rule of the elite, they could join forces, find a common policy, and take back the sovereign power while there is still time.

The issue is control of the national income. If we surrender our earnings to government, we can get nothing but rule by an elite. Only government by the ruthless is tough enough to hold this enormous power. So the aim of those who believe in liberty must be to reduce the share of the national income which the elite is permitted to manage. The strategy for defense of Constitutional or limited government is to block <u>all</u> efforts to give our money to the elite. They always have "good" reasons for asking us to give up our earnings. But the Welfare State can never provide welfare. And when the people begin to doubt the welfare slogans, patriotism becomes the last refuge of the power-mad.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VI, No. 13

APR 4

By Frank C. Hanighen March 30, 1949

ERP: It happened in the Senate on March 21, although you wouldn't know it from reading the press. You have to scan the fascinating columns of the Congressional Record. Well, Senator Taft came perilously close to pointing out where the body is buried. The ERP officials have been fussily trying to keep the matter hidden from the Ohioan, but not successfully. The British request for nearly a billion dollars of ECA money, Taft pointed out, is based on what they say they need, and this in turn springs from the economic plan of the Labor Government. These needs -- and maybe he was arch in putting it that way -- might be quite different if they had another plan (or another Government, as he delicately refrained from saying).

At this point, Senator Smith (N.J.) piously exhorted Taft to praise the British for their austerity program. But the Ohio Senator wasn't so inclined. He coldly gave Smith some instruction in the new economics. The austerity program is enforced "because they want certain things" -- specifically, capital improvements to which they devote "much more than we are spending", and social security. "If we spent as much for free health services as they are spending, this country would today be spending $5,000,000,000 for health services." In short, in the dry Taft manner the Senate was reminded of the fact, carefully guarded from the public view by the Hoffmans, Finletters, Vandenbergs and Connallys, that we are asked to underwrite, without shaving a nickel, the British Socialist experiment in the Welfare State. Irritating, but irrefutable. And hard for the mushy-minded to take. But, relentlessly, Professor Bob goes on performing the necessary task.

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CONGRESS OF INTELLECTUALS: Washington seemed almost a contemplative retreat, last week end, in comparison with New York which had rashly offered hospitality to a congress of intellectuals. Even at this distance, it was hard to disentangle any thread of intelligible sound from the cat chorus up there. One sensible conclusion appeared to be generally drawn by bewildered spectators -- that the collection of fellow travellers from this side of the Iron Curtain joined with the goose-stepping agents from the other side, had not the remotest connection with the issue of peace, the word mendaciously used to excuse the gathering. Whatever the opposition to the conference accomplished, it seemed to cow the participants into playing less ridiculously totalitarian roles than might otherwise have been the case. At any rate, the visitors from Moscow made fewer of the baboon-like noises which we have been accustomed to hear from that quarter.

We rather liked the leader of the opposition, Professor Sidney Hook. The Professor denounced both the "Communist-inspired" conference, and the State Department for barring Western European fellow travellers. (According to a naughty rumor in Washington, Secretary Acheson feared that the fellow travellers who wanted to come from England might prove indistinguishable from Professor Harold Laski who happened to arrive at the same time; Laski is a friend of Acheson.) Hook also teed off with what was probably the best utterance of the whole affair. Disputing the Soviet contention that "science is national in form and class in content", Hook remarked, "Such a proposition is demonstrably false. Science by its nature recognizes only what follows from evidence and what does not. The laws of science do not change with national boundaries. To maintain that there are class truths in science is to turn the screw of intellectual madness still tighter. It is to suggest that the competing claims of doctrines to be true are to be settled not by logic and experiment but by class struggle and war."

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Very good. But, instead of studying exclusively the beam in Moscow's eye, we prefer to examine the mote in America's. Economics is supposed to be a science, but judging from the way Department economists in Washington conduct themselves they follow the Soviet rather than the scientific method of dealing with -- among other things -- the fiscal problem. Few problems should be as dispassionately treated as the matter of taxation. Yet this issue is being tackled in a manner as frankly "class-conscious" as any Moscow anti-capitalist broadcast. Before many weeks as unscientific and class-bound a tax bill as can be imagined will be offered on a basis (on which many Republicans and Democrats seem agreed) of "soak the rich".

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MOSCOW STRATEGY: The sages in Washington read the omens not in the flight of birds, but in the flight of words on the ether waves. Hence, today, they are wondering if Moscow contemplates a new peace offensive. The radio propaganda from Soviet broadcasting stations since the publication of the North Atlantic Pact has been surprisingly moderate and the worst epithets seem to have been reserved for such countries as Finland and Yugoslavia.

Any softening of a propaganda barrage on the United States, however, does not mean that the Soviets will be entirely idle. It is felt that the screw is being turned tighter on Finland, to get the Communists into the coalition government in Helsinki. The pattern of Soviet policy in that little country may be the same as that followed by the Kremlin in Czechoslovakia: infiltration of the Government as a preparation for taking over the reins of power. And towards Yugoslavia, the fire of the Cominform is intensified. Observers here wonder if Russia is not preparing some sort of a coup d'etat by anti-Tito elements. The design in both these countries would be "indirect aggression"; a design which the Soviet may feel would not collide with the definition of aggression in the North Atlantic Pact.

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GERMANY: The State Department's conduct of the cold war is getting, as remarked in Alice in Wonderland, "curiouser and curiouser". Last week end, it gave the Soviet propaganda machine some real ammunition when it announced the transfer of 31 pieces of German territory to France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Soviet radio is not famed for subtle irony, but it can hardly miss the chance to wax delicately satiric over the following gem in the transfer announcement. "No one", says the communique gallantly, "will be forced to accept the nationality of the country to which the area is attached. Persons not desiring to accept this nationality will enjoy the protection accorded to persons and property by the laws of the country and no discrimination will be exercised against them." And if the Germans of these areas don't wish to stay, what then? Well, the communique is nothing if not generous: "They will have the right to settle in Germany, in which case they will be allowed to take with them their movable property, either retaining ownership of the real property or selling it and being permitted to transfer the funds to Germany under the special regulations which will be prescribed." In one final burst of magnanimity, the Western Allies proclaim, "They will, on the other hand, have the right to reside in the area concerned if they so desire."

Now, these 31 frontier "rectifications" amount to only 52 square miles. Nevertheless, it may be recalled that Secretary of State Byrnes in his epochal Stuttgart speech in 1946, righteously promised that the Western Allies would not alienate any German territory (except of course the French land grab of the Saar). In the same speech, Byrnes slyly put the U.S.S.R. and puppet Poland in the wrong by hinting that the West would not recognize Eastern grabs of German territory. This hint has

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undoubtedly contributed to the Germans' stubborn disinclination to play ball with the Russians. But will it have any force, now? To sum up -- the handsome work of the State Department and its allies last week end may be scored -- no runs, no hits, and 31 errors.

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"LIBERAL": Several years ago, Not Merely Gossip started a one-column campaign to discredit the current use of the word "liberal", as applied to persons, parties and policies which are really not liberal at all. We welcome to the crusade one writer of "letters to the editor", the Honorable Clarence B. Hewes, former American diplomat, who addresses the following remarks to the Wall Street Journal (March 27), as follows: "No term in the English language is currently more misused than the word liberal. Throughout history a political liberal has been a person who favored the mitigation of governmental authority and not its extension. Webster's dictionary defines a liberal as one 'friendly to great freedom in the constitution and administration in government'. The test, therefore, as to whether or not a measure is liberal is very simple: does it increase or lessen the dominion of government? Many of the laws enacted in recent years, and described by their proponents as liberal, have been in fact quite the reverse. Some of them are socialistic and others are statist in character."

Mr. Hewes concludes his letter by quoting Herbert Spencer: "The function of liberalism in the past was that of putting a limit to the power of kings. The function of true liberalism of the future will be that of putting a limit to the power of parliaments."

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STALIN, HITLER AND FDR: We are happy to discover one American scientist, in the field of psychology, who impartially examines international propaganda, past and present, be it from friend or foe. A dispatch in the Baltimore Evening Sun (March 23), reports that Dr. Ralph K. White has made a study for the Journal of Abnormal Psychology in which he compares Stalin's propaganda today with that of Hitler's before World War II. What scientist two years ago would have dared to brave the wrath of Dr. Harlow Shapley by mentioning two such figures in the same breath? But, there are no bounds to Dr. White's courage. According to the dispatch he also found similarities between Hitler's propaganda and Roosevelt's. "Like Roosevelt", the dispatch reports White as saying, "Hitler did not make any frontal attack on the values of conventional morality. Both men, in their speeches, painted a simple black-and-white picture in which their own country was always good and great and others -- enemies -- always bad. The popular impression that Hitler always glorified war is erroneous, Dr. White found. In fact, after coming to power in 1933, he continually glorified peace and preached against world conquest (by his enemies).

"Important difference", reports the Sun, "between Hitler's propaganda and Roosevelt's utterances lies in Hitler's emphasis on paranoid ideas of persecution. Roosevelt did denounce America's enemies with equal vigor, but he did not do it nearly so often. . . . Hitler expressed ideas of persecution more than three times as often. And Roosevelt had more objective evidence for describing our enemies as aggressors. Soviet propaganda, Dr. White finds, is like that of both Roosevelt's and Hitler's in that it rarely challenges openly (as it did in the earlier days of Marxism) any of the traditional moral values of Western civilization: peace, democracy, patriotism, religion, the family, etc. It glorifies the U.S.S.R. It paints a simple black-and-white picture." Dr. White sums up (according to the Sun): "Chief upshot of our whole analysis is that conscious intention is not necessary in order to produce aggression. Distorted perception can do it."

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Book Events

American Themes, by D. W. Brogan. New York: Harper and Brothers. $3.50.
Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

This is a collection of random papers written at one time and another in the last eighteen years, each having to do with some aspect of American life or history. Most of them have the form of reviews of books, and in some cases of books about other books, so that they have the character of what Mr. Hilaire Belloc has sardonically called writing cubed, which is to say "writing about writing about writing". But they retain for all that a good deal of freshness, thanks to Professor Brogan's prescience and wit. He is a cosmopolitan Scot who was able from the first to detach himself from the proverbial solipsism of the British imagination and to understand that what happened in 1776 was something more than a regrettable but minor episode of English history. He is certainly the best informed of contemporary foreign critics of the United States although perhaps too sympathetic to be the most acute.

One of the most interesting papers in the collection is an essay written at the time of the organization of the short-lived Liberty League. Mr. Brogan perceived that this effort of the privileged classes to equate the traditional freedoms with the rights of possession would only deliver its sponsors into the hands of their New Deal adversaries. The American emphasis, he observed, has always been on active rather than passive virtues, and upon concrete rather than abstract values. The willingness of modern Americans to follow the leadership of the rich has not been predicated as in Western Europe upon abstract and static notions of property but wholly upon tangible accomplishments and power. The preservation of the position enjoyed by the rich, Professor Brogan says, must depend upon this association of ideas. Thus Governor Al Smith would have been well advised to denounce the Administration, not as an enemy to property but as a hindrance to construction on such monuments to a triumphant capitalism as the Empire State Building. Mr. Du Pont would have done better to have said less about the rights of bondholders and more about the place of Duco and Chevrolets in the abundant life. The truth, the Professor tells us, is that whenever Americans have been persuaded that property rights were an impediment to material progress or to social reform they have dealt with them ruthlessly; as, for example, in the case of the slave-owners and of the brewers, distillers and saloonkeepers.

From all this Mr. Brogan appears to deduce that by 1934 the real authority had passed from the capitalists to the technicians, and this was because of the American faith in the goodness and saving power of the machine, a comfortable creed that Big Business itself has done much to advance. Should the technicians decide that their interests no longer coincide with those of the owning or lending classes, the principal obstacle to the movement of Society toward Socialism would be removed; and already the technicians were beginning to grow restive under the restraints placed upon them by the exigencies of the profit system and to look wistfully toward Russia as a place where the ideals of the assembly line and the principle of interchangeable parts could be applied even to humanity itself. Unfortunately, Mr. Brogan does not in this essay follow his reasoning to the point of asking whether the machine is not the real enemy of human liberty, as has been argued by many Europeans including Herr Juenger and the late Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz; but it is evident from other papers in the book that this is not his conclusion.

Some years earlier the French economist, M. Andre Siegfried, after his famous visit to the United States, had warned Europeans in a sentence much quoted by Mr. Brogan that they must choose between the way of Ford and the way of Gandhi. But in 1944, watching the bulldozers at work in England, Mr. Brogan thought that the way of Ford was not necessarily the less agreeable.

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